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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00
	EB-00	UTED-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OPIC-01	PA-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00	TEST-00
	TRSE-00	USIE-00	R-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
	SAS-00	/008W					

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8865

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WHA/PDA FOR BYERS, SCHINNERER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: KPAO, PHUM, VE
SUBJECT: ARMED ATTACK ON REGIONAL NEWSPAPER

SUMMARY

1. PRO-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATORS PROTESTED IN FRONT OF THE TWO LEADING NEWSPAPERS IN THE CITY OF MARACAY DURING THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 5-6. THE DEMONSTRATION AT "EL SIGLO" WAS VIOLENT. THE DEMONSTRATORS SHOT TWO NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES AND CAUSED EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO THE NEWSPAPER BUILDING,

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PREVENTING THE PAPER'S PUBLICATION DECEMBER 6. END SUMMARY.

DEMONSTRATORS AT "EL ARAGUENO"

2. A GROUP OF APPROXIMATELY 100 PERSONS, SELF-IDENTIFIED AS CHAVEZ SUPPORTERS, BEGAN DEMONSTRATING SHORTLY BEFORE MIDNIGHT ON DECEMBER 5 IN FRONT OF THE OFFICES OF "EL ARAGUENO" NEWSPAPER IN THE CITY OF MARACAY, ABOUT 75 MILES WEST OF CARACAS. AS SHOWN IN AMATEUR VIDEO FOOTAGE OF THE PROTEST AIRED ON VENEZUELAN TELEVISIONS, THE DEMONSTRATORS THREW ROCKS, SET OFF FIREWORKS AND BANGED POTS AND PANS.

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THE EDITOR OF "EL ARAGUENO," EVERT GARCIA, TOLD NATIONAL MEDIA THAT THE GROUP IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES TO HIM AS MEMBERS OF A BOLIVARIAN CIRCLE AND DEMANDED TO BE INTERVIEWED BY A REPORTER AND PHOTOGRAPHER FROM THE NEWSPAPER. GARCIA TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE CALLED CITY AND STATE POLICE (BOTH THE MAYOR AND GOVERNOR ARE PRO-CHAVEZ) TO REQUEST THEIR PRESENCE BUT NEITHER LAW ENFORCEMENT BODY APPEARED. GARCIA SPOKE WITH THE DEMONSTRATORS AND HAD HIS PHOTOGRAPHER TAKE PHOTOS OF THE GROUP, WHICH THEN LEFT.

VIOLENCE AT "EL SIGLO"

3. ABOUT ONE-HALF HOUR LATER, THE DEMONSTRATORS, NOW NUMBERING OVER 200, SHOWED UP IN FRONT OF "EL SIGLO" NEWSPAPER, WHICH HAS BEEN VERY CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT. AS DESCRIBED TO THE MEDIA BY NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES TRAPPED IN
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THE BUILDING DURING THE ATTACK, THE DEMONSTRATORS BROKE WINDOWS AND DOORS, THREW ROCKS AND SHOT AT THE BUILDING, CAUSING EXTENSIVE DAMAGE. (COMMERCIAL TELEVISIONS HAVE SHOWN FOOTAGE OF THE DAMAGED BUILDING; ITS FIRST FLOOR LOOKS TO BE GUTTED AND THERE ARE NUMEROUS BULLET HOLES IN THE WALLS.) TWO NEWSPAPER EMPLOYEES WERE SHOT, ONE IN THE BACK, THE OTHER, MORE SERIOUSLY, IN THE THIGH. THE DEMONSTRATORS ALSO SET FIRE TO A NEXT-DOOR GAS STATION. THE EDITOR, MAGALY CAPRILES, TOLD US THAT SHE CALLED LOCAL POLICE AND NATIONAL GUARD BUT, LIKE "EL ARAGUENO," RECEIVED NO SUPPORT. THE DEMONSTRATORS STAYED FOR NEARLY TWO HOURS, LEAVING AFTER A REGIONAL TELEVISION CAMERA CREW ARRIVED. THE INCIDENT PREVENTED "EL SIGLO" FROM PUBLISHING ITS EDITION DECEMBER 6.
SHAPIRO

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